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Remarks

By

C. Everett Koop, MD, ScD

Surgeon General

U.S. Public Health Service

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

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In honor

“National Children’s Accident Prevention Week”

The Trauma Center

Children’s Hospital National Medical Center

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One of the better things I did during my Washington Years was to team up with a trainee of mine, Martin Eichelberger, a pediatric surgeon of great skill and understanding and working with support, at first from Johnson & Johnson, we established the National Safe Kids’ Campaign. This press conference was a spin-off of that and much of what I had to say were notes scribbled on the prepared statement, which I had for the press conference.

I introduced National Children’s Accident Prevention Week by mentioning individuals from St. Paul to Dr. Eichelberger and reviewed my own life as a pediatric surgeon and then got into some statistics of how our technologically advanced society provides the root causes of trauma to children.

At the time this press conference was held, I was the Honorary Chair of the National Safe Kids’ Campaign and became its actual Chair, as soon as I retired from the Public Health Service, a position, which I held for thirteen years. During that time we saw deaths in children under fourteen caused by unintentional injury reduced by 40 per cent. That’s an enormous accomplishment when one considered how few were engaged in this extraordinarily worthwhile effort.

I attempted to tie the statistics in with other things that people knew about, including infectious disease and vaccines.

At the time of this press conference about 8,000 children died a year from unintentional injury and 50,000 were permanently disabled. It was out of this press conference that my statement grew, which became the national by-word of the Safe Kids’ Campaign: “If our children were dying at this rate from any disease, there would be a public outcry to do something about it.”

The National Safe Kids' Campaign has prospered well. There are about 250 Chapters throughout the states, and Dr. Eichelberger has now carried this to international fields as well and it's one of the best preventive efforts that I have ever seen in the field of public health.